

Message Text

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ORIGIN ARA-17

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TO AMEMBASSY PANAMA IMMEDIATE

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TAGS: PFOR, PN

SUBJECT: UNSC MEETING -- U. S. MEDIA REPORT FOR MARCH 15

PASS TO BRIAN BELL, USUN DELEGATION

ALL PRINCIPAL MEDIA STORIFIED THURSDAY' S SC OPENING, WITH
NYTIMES AND CHICAGO TRIBUNE COMMENTING EDITORIALY. TIMES
EDITORIAL TITLED: " US IN THE UN DOCK" SAYS SC MTG IN PANAMA
PART OF PANAMA' S " DRIVE TO GAIN CONTROL OVER THE CANAL AND
CANAL ZONE," SPECULATES OTHER LATAM ISSUES MAY COME UP, AND
INCLUDES ADVICE TO SCALI: " THIS FIRST SC MTG IN THE WESTERN
HEMISPHERE AWAY FROM UN HEADQUARTERS IN NY IS THUS ALMOST
CERTAIN TO PROVIDE A ROUGH PASSAGE FOR THE US AND A HARSH
BAPTISM FOR JOHN A. SCALI, THE NEW AMERICAN PERMANENT REPRE-
SENTATIVE. MR. SCALI WOULD BE WELL ADVISED, HOWEVER, TO
TAKE THE SESSIONS IN STRIDE AND TO REFRAIN FROM RESPONDING
IN KIND, WHATEVER THE PROVOCATION." CONCLUDES BY DISCUSSING
WHAT MAY HAPPEN CANAL ISSUE AFTER SC, QUOTING HURWITZ " IN
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THE MODERN WORLD WE CAN NO LONGER LOOK UPON A SOVEREIGN EN-
CLAVE IN THE TERRITORY OF ANOTHER COUNTRY IN PERPETUITY AS A

SECURE ENVIRONMENT IN WHICH TO OPERATE A CANAL.'" AND HOP-
ING THAT " GEN. TORRIJOS' S PROPAGANDA SHOW WILL NOT BRING NEW
RECRUITS TO THE ALREADY SIZABLE BAND OF SUPERPATRIOTS IN THE
AMERICAN CONGRESS WHO LOUDLY CONDEMN THE REASONABLE VIEW EX-
PRESSED BY MR. HURWITCH." TRIBUNE EDITORIAL THEME " PANAMA' S
SQUEEZE ON THE CANAL" SUMMARIZES HISTORY OF CANAL ISSUE, CON-
CLUDING WITH: " THE PANAMANIAN POLITICIANS DON' T WANT THE
CANAL AS MUCH AS THEY WANT THE ISSUE. THE US HAS NOTHING
TO GAIN BY BACKING DOWN. WE DONT KNOW WHAT THE UN CAN DO
TO MAKE MATTERS WORSE, BUT WE EXPECT TO FIND OUT SOON.

TIMES PUBLISHES SEVERO' S DISPATCH ON PAGE 16. 3- COLUMN
HEADLINE: " U. N. PANEL SITS IN PANAMA TODAY; SUB HEAD-
LINES: " TORRIJOS ASKS ' MORAL BACKING OF WORLD' ON CANAL
ISSUE; CANAL NOT ON AGENDA BUT U. S. AIDES FEAR RESENTMENT
IS." FIRST PARAGRAPHS DISCUSS TORRIJOS' COMMENTS COMPARING
CANAL ISSUE TO VIETNAM AND SCHAUFLE' S VIEWS ON THIS.
SCHAUFLE QUOTED DIRECTLY: "' I AGREE THAT AMERICANS ARE
QUITE SENSITIVE TO PUBLIC OPINION,' HE SAID, ' BUT SURELY
THERE IS A DISTINCTION BETWEEN THEIR REACTION TO THE
VIETNAM WAR -- WHICH WAS SELF- ENGENDERED -- AND WHAT IS
GOING TO HAPPEN HERE. EVEN IF AMERICANS ARE INCLINED TO
AGREE THAT SOME CHANGES OUGHT TO BE MADE IN THE CANAL' S
STATUS, THERE MAY BE STRONG REACTIONS IN THE UNITED
STATES IF WE ARE TOO VIOLENTLY ATTACKED IN THIS SECURITY
COUNCIL MEETING.'

"' ONE OF THE RESERVATIONS ABOUT THE UNITED NATIONS IN THE
UNITED STATES,' HE SAID,' IS THE FEELING THAT TOO OFTEN IT
HAS BEEN USED AS A PLATFORM TO ATTACK US. IF THE PROCEED-
INGS ARE TOO VIGOROUS, VIOLENT AND FIERY, IT COULD BACKFIRE
ON PANAMA.'"

SEVERO DISCUSSES " AIR OF TRANQUILITY" PANAMA AND GIVES
BACKGROUND ON CANAL NEGOTIATIONS, THEN SAYS " THERE WAS
STILL NO CLEAR PICTURE OF PRECISELY WHAT THE SECURITY
COUNCIL PLANNED TO DO." QUOTED AMERICAN DIPLOMAT AS SAY-
ING: " THIS WOULD APPEAR TO BE A MEETING IN SEARCH OF AN
AGENDA.'" FINAL SUBJECT IS SOUTHERN COMMAND, WITH ARTICLE
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DISCUSSING BOTH PANAMA' S OBJECTIONS TO ITS PRESENCE AND
FACT THAT " PERHAPS EVEN MORE IMPORTANT IS THE FREQUENTLY
OVERLOOKED BUT CLOSE WORKING RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PANAMA' S
NATIONAL GUARD AND THE SOUTHERN COMMAND." CONCLUDING
PARAGRAPH READS: " AS TO THE CHARGE THAT THE SOUTHERN
COMMAND IS STOCKPILING NUCLEAR OR BACTERIOLOGICAL WEAPONS,
A MILITARY SPOKESMAN REPLIED: ' NO, NO, HELL NO, A
THOUSAND TIMES NO, OF COURSE NOT."

WASHINGTON POST PUBLISHES MARLISLE SIMONS ON PAGE 23,

2- COLUMN HEADLINE: " U. N. BODY MEETS IN PANAMA TODAY." SIMONS RECAPS CANAL NEGOTIATIONS, TALKS ABOUT WHICH LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES NOT SENDING FOREIGN MINISTERS AND WHAT ISSUES LIKELY TO COME UP. GOES ON TO MENTION TIGHT SECURITY NETWORK " WHICH SO FAR APPEARS TO BE THE BEST-OILED PART OF THE ORGANIZATION," AND THEN SAYS: " ACCORDING

TO U. S. GOVERNMENT SOURCES, WHITE HOUSE STAFFER WILLIAM JORDAN ... EXTRACTED A PROMISE FROM BRIG. GEN. OMAR TORRILLOS TO AVOID ANTI- AMERICAN DEMONSTRATIONS. THE PANAMANIAN GOVERNMENT DENIED THAT SUCH A PROMISE WAS MADE, SAYING THAT ITS CONCERN WAS WITH THE MEMBERS OF THE U. N. DELEGATION." ARTICLE CONCLUDES BY DESCRIBING AND QUOTING BILLBOARDS.

WALL STREET JOURNAL FRONT PAGES ERIC MORGENTHAUER HEADLINE: UN SECURITY COUNCIL IS MEETING IN PANAMA AMID ANTI- U. S. CHORUS; SUB HEADLINES: " LATIN NATION IS SET TO PROTEST U. S. PRESENCE IN CANAL ZONE; FIGURING A GENERAL QUOTIENT." COMMENTS PRE- LENTEN CARNIVAL NOT AS FESTIVE AS SOME IN YEARS PAST BUT " ONE LOCAL WAG THINKS HE KNOWS WHY: ' A LOT OF PEOPLE,' HE SAYS WITH A LAUGH, ' ARE EXPECTING THE REAL CARNIVAL TO TAKE PLACE THIS WEEK.'" DISCUSSES UNSC MEETING BRIEFLY AND SUMMARIZES CANAL NEGOTIATIONS. FOLLOWS WITH DESCRIPTION OF PHYSICAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR MEETING -- NO VACANT HOTEL ROOMS, RENOVATION OF THE LEGISLATIVE PALACE, REMOVAL OF THE 9- FOOT- HIGH FENCE ON KENNEDY AVENUE " THE U. S. SAYS THAT IT DECIDED TO REMOVE THE FENCE SIX MONTHS AGO AND THAT THE TIMING WAS COINCIDENTAL. PANAMA, NATURALLY, SEES THE MOVE AS AN EFFORT TO MAKE THE ZONE APPEAR LESS LIKE A COLONIAL ENCLAVE TO THE VISITING U. N. DELEGATES..." ARTICLE THEN MENTIONS U. S. PUBLICITY CAM- UNCLASSIFIED

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PAIGN: " THE U. S. INFORMATION SERVICE HAS TAKEN OVER A SUITE IN THE EL PANAMA HOTEL AND FLEW IN STAFF REINFORCEMENTS FROM THE STATES." ARTICLE CONCLUDES BY DESCRIBING CANAL ZONE AND NUMBER OF U. S. GENERALS (REF SUB HEADLINE). FINAL PARAGRAPH READS: " FEW OBSERVERS HERE EXPECT ANY PROBLEMS TO BE SOLVED BY THE SC MEETING,... SOME, IN FACT, THINK THE EXPECTED COMMOTION MAY EXACERBATE EXISTING DIFFERENCES. ' THE WHOLE IDEA OF BRINGING THE U. N. INTO THIS IS TOTALLY OUT OF PLACE,' ONE AMERICAN SAYS. ' CAN YOU IMAGINE WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF CZECHOSLOVAKIA DECIDED TO PLAY HOST TO A MEETING TO DISCUSS PROBLEMS WITH RUSSIA?'"

BALTIMORE SUN AND WASHINGTON STAR COLUMN BY SMITH HEMPSTONE HEADLINED: " U. S. FACING A STACKED U. N. DECK." LEAD: " THE WEEK- LONG SESSION OF THE UNSC, WHICH OPENED TODAY IN PANAMA CITY, IS UNFORTUNATE IN ALMOST EVERY RESPECT."

OTHER MEDIA -- CBS RADIO AND TELEVISION HAVE CARRIED
COMMENTARY FROM HOTTELET ON PREPARATIONS FOR THE OPENING
SESSION. MORNING MARCH 15 HOTTELET " THE SC CONVENES
OFFICIALLY TO CONSIDER ' MEASURES FOR THE MAINTENANCE AND
STRENGTHENING OF INTERNATIONAL PEACE AND SECURITY IN LATIN
AMERICA,' IN FACT PANAMA HAS BROUGHT THE COUNCIL HERE TO

LISTEN TO CHARGES THAT THE U. S. PRESENCE IN THE CANAL ZONE
IS ILLEGAL, A VIOLATION OF THE U. N. CHARTER, REMNANT OF
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